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FROM USMISSION UNESCO

IO/UNESCO FOR JANE COWLEY  
EUR/ERA FOR PETER CHASE

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SUBJECT: UNESCO: CULTURAL DIVERSITY CONVENTION:  
DIRECTOR-GENERAL MATSUURA STILL WANTS A CONSENSUS  
AGREEMENT

REF STATE 179138

1. Ambassador Oliver met September 28 with UNESCO Director General Matsuura and delivered points reftel. Matsuura responded that he continued to hope that a consensus document would emerge that could be adopted at the October 2005 General Conference. He told Ambassador Oliver that he had suggested to the Mexican Chair of the Culture Commission that the Chair convene small working groups of key people whose efforts to find compromise would perhaps be in parallel with other efforts. The Mexican Chair, he reported, seemed to take the suggestion on board. He also said that he had had some discussion with several ambassadors, stressing that he still wants a consensus document.

2. Ambassador Oliver later discussed the DG's proposal with the British ambassador (current EU president) stressing the extremely serious concerns of senior levels of the US Government. The UK Ambassador replied that there is no possibility of any action at UNESCO since the positions of delegations at UNESCO are firm. He said that the only place in which the situation could be changed is in capitals.

3. Separately, Ambassador Oliver met on 28 September with the African Group. Her message of the need to look at the Convention in light of U.S. commitment to UNESCO's programs was well received. She appealed to them to try to understand that the US has a different philosophy than many of the countries at UNESCO. She emphasized that the US tries to avoid top-down directives, like legal instruments, in favor of bottom-up activities by local community and civil society. She also thanked them for supporting the USD 610 million budget and asked for their support for the US in the World Heritage Committee and International Hydrological Program elections. The main purpose of the meeting was to lay the groundwork for further initiatives and demarches both at UNESCO and in capitals on the Convention. (Note: The Beninese deputy told the DCM today that the Ambassador totally disarmed the attendees and has provoked some Africa group members to think about their positions.)

OLIVER